



A Little Handful of Cordial Comforts for a Fainting Soul,

Scattered throughout several Answers to certain Questions and Objections following.

The First Question.

OH Wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Wrath to come? for my sins are many, and my iniquities are great; and if the Lord should deal with me according to his Justice and my Deserts, my Portion must needs be in the Lake of Fire with the Devil and his Angels. For the Scripture pronounceth every man Cursed that continueth not in all things Written in the Book of the Law, to do them, Gal. 3.10. Shew me therefore (I beseech you) shew me what course to take, to come out of this misery; shew me the way how to get the Pardon of my sins, and the favour of God, I care for nothing but this, neither is there any thing in the World that I do desire in comparison of this.

Answer.

This is that (indeed) which of all other

things doth most concern us, For upon the pardon of our Sins, and Peace with God, depends all Solid Comfort while we are here, and the Eternal Salvation of our most precious Souls hereafter. And therefore for our better, both Direction and Consolation in this behalf, let us take notice of this that follows :

There is a way for men to come out of the misery of sin, and to obtain and enjoy the Mercy and favour of Almighty God, and that is *Faith in Christ* : this is the way, and there is none but this ; neither is there any thing in the World, that can help us to the Pardon of our Sins, to the Love of God, and the Salvation of our Souls, but only *Faith in the Lord Jesus*.

That this is the way, is apparent enough by the Answer which was given by *Paul and Silas* *Act. 16. 31.* for when the Keeper of the Prison cried out with trembling, *Sirs what must I do to be saved?* they made him this answer, *believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.* There is in Christ sufficiency enough for the obtaining of our Pardon, and the procuring of our Peace ; and there is in Faith Ability enough to make us partakers of Christs sufficiency. Christ is the only way whereby we come unto eternal Life, and Faith is the only way whereby we come to be partakers of Christ ; by Faith we come unto him, and through him unto God.

And that we may the better know, that the

is in Christ sufficiency enough for the Pardon of our Sins, and the salvation of our Souls, let us consider a little, both who Christ is, and also what he hath done for the working out of our deliverance, and the procuring of our Peace.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, who pitying that sinful and miserable condition, wherewith we are all brought by the disobedience of our first Parent, undertook to Mediate the matter betwixt God and us, and to reconcile us again unto God. For the better effecting of which great work, He came down from Heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, and was made Man yea in all things like unto other men, save only in sin, that so he might the better make us free from all sin. Being thus found in the fashion as a Man, he set himself in our stead, and for us Men, and for our Salvation, he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. And by his Obedience and Death he hath perfectly alone by himself accomplished whatever was requisite for our Salvation.

The wretchedness of our condition is briefly this: We all like Sheep have gone astray, neither have we only omitted those Duties, which the Law requires, but we have also committed those Evils, which the Law forbids; and as the want of Righteousness doth exclude us from the favour of God, and the Kingdom of Hea-

ven: so the guiltiness of sin doth expose us to the wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell. But the Lord Jesus Christ hath fulfilled all Righteousness. For in his Life he performed as much obedience, as the Law in rigor could exact; and by suffering Death upon the Cross, he underwent as much Punishment as could be required of Sinners, in the severity of Justice: and so by his Death and obedience hath he provided against our double Misery. For by his sufferings upon the Cross, the Justice of God is satisfied, and his Wrath appeased; and by his Obedience the Law is fulfilled, and we are accepted. And as by his Death comes the pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath, so by his Obedience comes the imputation of Righteousness, and life Everlasting. All which as they were done in our Nature, so they were done for us, and in our behalf, he stood in the place of Sinners, that we might be numbered among the Righteous; he took our sins upon him, that he might put his Obedience upon us; the chastisement of our Peace was upon him, that with his stripes we may be healed; he was made a Curse for us, that he might Redeem us from it; he was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him: 2 Cor. 5.22.

And the better to assure us that by his Death upon the Cross, there was paid a price sufficient enough

enough for the procuring of our Pardon, He arose again from the dead, which he could not have done, if the Justice of God had not been satisfied to the very full in every particular. For as sin is the sting of Death, and the only thing that makes Death terrible, so it is the strength of Death, and it is that only that doth give Death dominion over us: Sin is the Lock, and Bar, and Bolt, that makes fast the Gates of Death; and as the Door cannot be opened to let out a Prisoner, till the Bar be removed; so there is no escaping from Death, until sin be taken out of the way. Christ therefore by Rising from the Dead hath mightily declared unto us, that he hath paid the utmost farthing of our Debts, and that by his Death he hath fully satisfied the Justice of God. So that now by vertue of his Sufferings, the greatest sins are made pardonable, and there is a way set open for the worst of sinners, both to Grace and Glory. I say even for the worst sinners. There is no man now that can deny himself to be capable of Grace; there are too many, who from the greatness of Gods Mercy, do without any cause presume to sin; but there is no man, who from the heinousness of his sins hath any just cause to despair of Mercy: for though our sins be many, yet the mercies of God be more; though they be great, yet his Mercies are above them; he is rich in Mercy.

yea, his Mercy is Infinite, so that though he hath spent much Mercy already upon our Forefathers, yet he hath Mercy enough in store for us also ; with him there is plenty of Forgiveness, and his Mercy endureth for ever : And the Merits of Christ are of the same Nature for he is Mighty to save, and he is the same for ever ; and though the Riches of these Merits of Christ, there is a way set open, even for the worst sinners, to become partakers of the Riches of the Mercies of God. Now if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, &c. 1 Job. 2, 1, 2. And though the time of his abode upon earth in the days of his Flesh were but short, though his sufferings were but for a season ; yet such was, and is the dignity of his Person (being the Eternal Son of God) that his Suffereings and Obedience are infinitely Meritorious, and his Blood is able to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness : So that we may well say with the Apostle, *Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that Dyed, or rather who is risen again, and now maketh Intercession for us, Rom. 8. 33, 34.* But let no Man turn this Doctrine of Comfort to a liberty of sinning : against the greatest sins there is hopes in Christ for penitent Believers. But because there is Mercy with God, shall we therefore go on in sin ? God forbid : There is "Mercy with him,

him, and therefore he must be Feared. But if any Man shall presume to sin, because there is Mercy with God, through Jesus Christ ; instead of Mercy, that man is like to meet with nothing but Justice : for as merciful as God is, and as All-sufficient as the Death of Christ is, there is no Mercy for such as go on still in their wickedness.

And thus you see that Christ is mighty enough to save us from all our Sins, and to reconcile us unto God : now that we may have benefit by this sufficiency of Christ, we must lay hold upon it by a lively Faith. This is that which Unites us unto Christ, and makes us one with him ; this is that which gives us Interest in him, and makes us partakers of his Merits ; this makes the Death and Obedience of Christ as verily our own, and as effectual for the Pardon of our Sins, as the Salvation of our Souls, and if they had been performed by our very selves. So that if we do truly believe in the Lord Jesus, then is God well pleased with us for his sake, and by Virtue of his Merits, being made ours by Faith, our Sins are Pardon-ed, and our Souls and Bodies shall be Eternally saved. And so much the Scripture doth plainly testifie in several places. As Job. 3. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *Whosoever believeth in him should not Perish, but have Life Everlasting.* And again

Act. 10. 43. Through his Name, whosoever believeth in him, shall have remission of Sins (be they never so many, never so bainous) And again, *Act. 13. 38, 39.* Be it known unto you, that through this Man is Preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins, and by him all that believe are Justified, from all those things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. By the Law of Moses, we could never have been acquitted either from the guiltiness of Sin, or from the wrath of God : But we are delivered from both, by Faith in Christ ; for by it we obtain the forgiveness of our Sins and the Salvation of our Souls.

And thus it is manifest, *That Christ is the way by which we are to obtain the Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God ; and that Faith is the way whereby we are made Partakers of the Merits of Christ for our Justification and Salvation.* Proceed we now in a word, to shew that nothing but Christ can reconcile us unto God, and that nothing but Faith can make us partakers of Christ for our reconciliation.

There is no way whereby to come unto God but only Christ : It is only in Christ that God is well pleased ; neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, *Act. 4. 12.* Neither is there any other means on our part, whereby to receive Christ,

Christ, but only Faith; and yet unless we do receive him, we get no benefit by him; and therefore unless we do believe in him, we shall perish in our sins. And to this purpose speaks our Saviour, *Job. 3. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* See the sum of all this, in that place of *St. John, I Epist. 11. 12, and 13. ver- ses.* God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life. These things have I written to you, that believe in the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life, and that ye may believe in the Name of the Son of God. By which place it is plain, that there is a way to Life; that Christ is the way to it; that Life is so in him, that it is in no other but him; that it is so in him, that by believing in him, we obtain Life; and that it is so in him, that without believing in him, we get no benefit at all by him. And thus you have the Truth of the former Answer enlarged and that confirmed according to its several Branches; by which it is manifest, that *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing else but only Faith in him,* can help us to the pardon of sin, the love of God, and the salvation of our souls.

Hereupon it may be thus applied,

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The second Question.

IFI cannot obtain the pardon of my sins, and the favour of God, without Faith in Christ, I doubt my condition is woful, and that I am yet in my sins, and liable unto Wrath. For I fear I have not this Faith in Christ, and that I do not as yet believe in him. Shew me therefore (I pray you) how I may be comforted against this fear, and how I may know whether I do believe in Christ, yea or no.

Answer.

Doubtless if we do not believe in Christ, our condition is woful: for there is no salvation in any other; and without Faith in him, we can get no benefit by him, but we are in our sins, and the obligation unto wrath is in full power and force against us. For though the Ransom which Christ paied by his Death upon the Cross, be a Ransome abundantly sufficient for the sins of the whole World; yet the benefit of that Death of his is bestowed on none, but upon such conditions as God himself pleaseth: which conditions for such as be of years, are Faith and Repentance; which if we want, we shall be sure to perish in our sins, not out of any defect in Christ, but only because we want those conditions, whereby we come to have interest in him, and to be partakers of his Merits. Now, that we may the better know whether we have this Faith in us, yea or no (and so neither be deceived with vain hopes, nor yet discomfited with false fears) consider this which follows,

and see what answer you can make to these several demands.

Are you sensible of the misery wherein you are by reason of your sins? And do you find that you need a Saviour? Do you know who is the Saviour of the World? Do you know in some good measure who Christ is, and what he hath done for us, and what are the benefits that are to be had by him? Do you know what a necessity there is of having of him, and what a misery it is to be without him, and what we must do, if we would have any benefit in him? And do you verily believe that Christ Jesus, and none but he, is the Saviour of the World, and that he hath both done and suffered, as the Scriptures Testifie of him? Do you verily believe that there is no way to Heaven but Christ, that there is no part to be had in him, but by Renouncing all other Lords, and all other Saviours, and by adhering wholly unto him for all our consolation and salvation? And do you now desire from the Heart to be made partaker of Christ? And do you sincerely endeavour to accept of him, and to embrace him? And can you be content for his sake to forsake all things and to undergo any misery, rather then to part with him? Can you be content to take him (we say) *For better or worse*, and not only for your Jesus, to save you from your sins, but also for your Lord, to command and dispose

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you at his pleasure ? And is it your care to know his Will ? And is it your endeavour to yield him an Universal Obedience ? And is it your practice in Obedience unto him, to exercise your self to keep a Conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward Men, and constantly, and Conscionably to deny all ungodliness and Worldly Lusts; and to live godly, and righteously, and soberly in this present World ? Do You thus accept of Christ, and submit unto him ? Nay, *It is your hearty desire and unfained endeavour so to do ?* Then you may be sure that you have some degrees of true Faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore that Christ is yours, that God is yours, that all is yours. For this is such a qualification as hath the promise, both of the Life that now is, and also of that, that is to come.

By these questions we may examine our condition. For after this manner is Faith wrought in us ; such are the preparatives, such is the nature, and such are the effects of a true Faith, as are implied in these Questions ; so that if we can in some good measure make understanding and affectionate answer to them all, then we may be sure that we have a true Faith, in Christ : But if either we know him not, or desire not to accept of him, or care not to obey him, we have then cause to think that we do not believe in him ; and if we think otherwise,

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We do but deceive our own souls.

Now if upon examination had, we find that we want Faith, we must be diligent in using the means whereby to get it, which by reading and hearing of the Word of God, and conferring about it. *For Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word.* If we find that we have this Faith, we must be careful to keep it, and so increase it, by the Word, by the Sacra-ments, and by Prayer.

The Third Question.

Upon this that hath been spoken, another Question may be raised to this purpose. I do in some measure know who Christ is, and I do believe he is a Saviour All-sufficient, and that there is no other way to Salvation, but him, and that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish: And I my self would believe in him: But how may I know that I ought to believe in him, and that :ne invitation of Faith do concern me? How may I know whether it would be welcome, or not, if I should se so bold as to come unto him?

Answer.

couragement herein, and that we may more boldly unto the Throne of Grace. We know, that Christ is a common Saviour of the World; and that the al-sufficiency of his Merits, is one of those, whose nature he took

took, unto whom his merits are not communicable; neither is there any one, who in that respect may not truly be said to be savable. *The promise is made to you, and to your Children, and to all that be afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Act. 2.39.* Now if you desire to know, whether you be one of those, whom he doth call to believe in him, consider then whether or no, you be sensible of your misery, and burdened with your sins; whether your desire be to be eased of your sins, and to be partaker of Christ, and of those benefits and comforts that be in him. For if we be thus qualified we may be confident that we are of the number of those, whom he doth seriously invite to come unto him, and to depend upon him. And hereof you have ~~ta~~ witness of your self, and Gods own hand to shew for it, to your great comfort. For these are his own words; *Unto me all ye that labour and be heavy laden I will give you rest, Mat. 11.28.* And again *any man Thirst, let him come unto me and John 7.37.* Unto such thirsty Souls was sent, he came to speak peace to such weary, and broken hearted, and to such as are bruised. So that you may see what a misery it is to be in sin, O Saviour, have thereupon an ear delivered from this misery, we beseeche you that he calls upon us to come

Our very names were specified in these invitations: being thus qualified, we may come boldly, and upon our coming shall be sure to find rest; but without this Badge we have no warrant at all to expect a welcome. *They that do thus hunger and thirst after Righteousness shall be filled; but they that be rich in their own conceits, and are not sensible of any wants, these he sends empty away.*

The Fourth Question.

But if I find that I want this sorrow, what course shall I take, to bring my heart to be humbled for my sins?

Answer.

To this end let a Man examine himself by the Law of God. For by the Law is the knowledge of sin. And let him duly think upon that fearful curse of God, whereunto every the least sin doth make us liable. Let him diligently consider, how ugly and loathsome sin doth make us in the sight of God, and what a fearful thing it is to be deprived of the Love of God, and the joyes of Heaven, and what a misery it is to be exposed to the Wrath of God, and the Torments of Hell. Let him seriously ponder what a misery it is to lose the Soul. Let him throughly weigh the Nature of Eternity, and the strictness of that Account that is to come; and the severity of that

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Sentence, which in that last and dreadful Day shall be pronounced upon all impenitent sinners, when they shall be adjudged to that everlasting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. All these are of singular use to wound our souls, and to effect our hearts with sorrow for our sins. It is the Law that makes way for the Gospel: for thus *John* the Baptist by denouncing the Judgments of God upon wicked courses, prepared the way for our blessed Saviour. But especially let him consider, how great things God hath done for him. For as there is no greater obligation to obedience, than the loving-kindness of the Lord so there is nothing that doth more aggravate our sins, and so consequently our misery; and therefore nothing that can tend more to the breaking of the heart, than the consideration of the bounty and long-suffering of God to us-wards. And this plainly appears by that course which the Prophet *Nathan*, at the Lords appointment took with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. for by setting before his eyes Gods many and wonderful mercies vouchsafed, and his own extream ingratitude and ill requital of so great goodness, he was constrained to cry out with shame and sorrow, *I have sinned against the Lord.*

And amongst all the mercies of God, there is none that doth more deserve to take up all our thoughts, than that departure of Christ, which

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he accomplished at *Jerusalem*; neither is there any thing that doth more tend, either to preserve us from sin, or to humble us for our failings, than the death of our Saviour.

For, suppose the Lord Jesus should present himself unto us, when we are about to commit any sin, or after we have done it, as he was hanging upon the Cross, with his Sides Scourged, his Face Buffeted, his Hands and Feet Nailed, his Head Crowned with Thorns, his very Heart pierced, his whole Body upon the Rack, and Trickling down with Drops of Blood, speaking unto us after this or the like manner. *Behold, if ever sorrows were like unto my sorrows; and yet all this was but the punishment of thy sins. It is thy sins that have brought me to all these Torments; and canst thou delight in that which was the cause of such misery? All this have I done for thy good, and is this the requital of my Love? I have born thy sins, that thou mightest be eased, mine hands were bound, that thine might be freed; my Sides were Scourged, that thine might be spared; my Cheeks were Buffeted, that thine might be Kist; my Head was Crowned with Thorns, that thine might be Crowned with Glory; and is this thy kindness to thy Friend, thus to return me hatred for my good-will? Hast thou not put me to pains enough already, but that thou must Rake in my Wounds, and make a sport of my misery? or if thou wilt not pity me, yet pity thy self. For*

can that be light to thee, which cost me so heavy ? or
shalt thou escape the Cup, that art a sinner, when
my Beloved Father would not spare me that was
but a Surety.

Suppose (I say) that the Lord Jesus should present himself and speak unto us, after this or the like manner ; would not such a sight make our Bowels to yern, and such Words cut us to the very heart ? Doubtless it were enough to make the dryest eyes to wish for Tears of Blood, and the hardest heart of the most obstinate Sinner, to become in the midst of his Body like melting Wax, thus to hear and look upon him whom they have pierced : yea it is impossible for any man to think on this, and to go on in sin, but such as could be content to Crucifie again the Lord of Glory.

And thus you see, what are the chiefest helps to Humiliation, and by what means our Hearts may be brought to be deeply affected with sorrow for our sins.

Hereupon a timerous Heart will be ready to reply yet further after this manner :

The Fifth Question.

By this course, and by these and the like Meditations, I confess that I have been brought in some Measure to be sorry for my Sins, and now I would fain be eased of them ; and it is my desire to believe in Christ, but I fear that I am not enough Humbled,

Humbled; I fear I have not so great a measure of Sorrow, as may make me capable of this Invitation; and my Heart is so hardened, that I cannot grieve and mourn for my Sins so much as I should, and would do; and therefore I fear, that as yet I have no right to the Comforts of the Gospel:

Answer.

True it is, that Sorrow for Sin makes ready an Heart prepared for the Lord; and as usually in the course of Nature, there is no Birth without some pain: So in the work of Grace, there is no regeneration, (that of Infants Baptism excepted) without some Sorrow. But as there are Degrees of pain in the Natural Birth: So in the Degrees of Spiritual Birth, there are Degrees of Sorrow. Some Women have a quick dispatch, others have a more tedious Travel: and so it is in the New Birth, all are not pained alike. Some there be that go mourning all the day long, yea, day after day, whereas unto others, heaviness indures, but as it were for a night, and joy cometh in the morning. We must know therefore, and that for our comfort that it is not the quantity, but the quality of Sorrow, that God looks after; neither matters it so much, how great our Sorrow be, as how true it is.

If a Youth, upon due examination be found fit for the University, his Tutor never demand how long he hath been at School, how harsh

he hath been dealt withal, how often he hath been Whipt, before he could come to that perfection; all that he looks after is, whether or no he be fit to be admitted: So it fares with us; the Law is our School-master to bring us unto Christ; and this it doth, partly by discovering unto us our sins, whereby we see that we need a Saviour: and partly by threatening of us with the Curse, whereby we are made more careful to look out after this Saviour, and more willing to accept of him, and for our own ease to submit unto him, when once we have found him. Now when we can be content to accept of Christ upon any Terms, then are we ready for him, then are we fit to be admitted into him. And when we do seek unto Christ for this admission, he regards not so much, how long we were at School under the Law, how often we were ashed by it, or how sorely we have smarted under it; but all that he looks after is, whether we be fit to come unto him. Consider therefore with your self, had you ever such a sight and sorrow for your sins, as made you weary of them, and out of love with them, and willing to be eased of them, and desirous of Interest in Christ, and ready to accept of Christ upon any Terms rather than to go without him? is it your grief that you cannot be more sorrowful, and not you desire as much to be kept from sin the time to come, as to have all that pardoned

doned that is past? Surely, if you stand thus affected, then are you fitted and made ready for Christ; and whether your sorrow were great or little, yet it is a token, that it was a true and a godly sorrow, because it worketh repentance unto Salvation, never to be repented of.

It may be yet further objected, thus:

The Sixth Question.

I Confess that I have been grieved for my sins, and I have been desirous to believe in Christ: but I fear that my Sorrow is not good, nor my Faith sound, because my Obedience is so faulty; for I am not so willing to forsake all my sins, nor so careful to yield Christ Obedience, as I should be; or if I am willing so to do, yet mine infirmities and my failings are such, and so many, that I fear my Sorrow and my Faith, are not such as they ought to be.

Answer.

Certain it is, that sorrow for sin will nothing avail us, without amendment of Life; the wicked must forsake his wayes, if he expect pardon, Isa. 55. 7. And it is he that confesseth his sins, and forsaketh them, that shall find Mercy, Prov. 28. 13. If we willingly allow our selves in the practise of any thing displeasing unto God, our condition is dangerous. If we say that we abide in Christ, we must walk as he walked, or else we deceive our own Souls, 1 John 2. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with God,

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and yet walk in Darkness, we Lye, and the Truth is not in us, I Job. i. 6. And if it be not our Study and Exercise to yield Christ an Universal Obedience, our Faith is but Presumption, our Peace is but Security, our Hopes are but Shadows, and our Expectation will perish.

But if we have an hearty desire, and a sincere endeavour in all things to live Honestly, we may not from our failings and imperfections presently conclude that we are not sanctified at all, that we have no Faith, no Interest in Christ, no Love of God in us. For perfection is not to be attained unto, while we be in the Body; but sincerity is that which may be had, and affords unto us matter of Comfort; for the Lord loves them that follow after Righteousness, Pro. 15. 9. And they whose sincere desire and endeavour it is to have respect to all the Commandments, are accepted of him. If it be our unfeigned desire, study and endeavour, in obedience unto Christ, to do whatsoever he commandeth; if it be our care to cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God, and not wickedly to depart from him in any thing: I say, if it be our unfeigned desire, study and endeavour so to do, we may safely conclude, notwithstanding all our imperfections, that our sorrow is good, and our Faith sound, and that our sins are pardoned, and our service is accepted

ted and our souls shall be saved. For in Gods account and acceptation, that goes for a clean life, which is not stained with wilful pollutions, and whose obedience is extended to the utmost of his knowledge, and hath withal a purpose to attend what God shall hereafter make him know to be sinful; to that Man is allowed the opinion of gracious.

See further in this point in answer to Objection, 15.

The Seventh Question.

*I*f these things be so, I find then that my condition at the present is good; and if I were sure to Dye in this Estate, I make no doubt but I should be happy. But I fear that I shall not continue in this condition; for my Enemies are many, and Mighty, and Crafty, and Watchful, and I my self are prone to sin, and apt to fall from my own stedfastness; and I find by experience that many who have begun in the spirit, have ended in the flesh, and their latter ends have been worse than their beginnings. This makes me to fear that I shall not continue faithful unto the Death; and yet without this continuance, I shall never obtain the Crown of Life.

Answer.

All these things I confess are true; such are our Enemies, such is our weakness; and the misery of those that do turn back from the Holy Commandment given unto them, is such that that it had been better for them not to have known

known the way of Truth, 2 Pet. 2. 21. For they shall lose those things that they have done, and their Portion shall be with Unbelievers. So that a Man cannot chuse but have cause to fear. Nevertheless there is comfort in God against this fear also ; yea, *this very fear of falling away* hath in it matter of Consolation, for it is a means to keep us from departing from God, *Jer. 32. 40. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

Many there be that having begun well, do yet at length grow weary of well-doing, and so lose what they have done ; and therefore let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall : But yet let not our Hearts be troubled let us not be dismay'd with fear, for the perseverance of such as are *Justified and Sanctified in Deed and in Truth*, is certain, and the Foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his, and he knoweth how to deliver them out of Temptation. In further answer to this Objection, and the better to comfort us against this fear, take special notice of these Texts of Scriptures, 1 Pet. 1. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God by Faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.* Joh. 10. 27, 28, 29. *My Sheep bear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them Etern-*

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nal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand,

2 Chron. 16. 9. For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.

The Eighth Question.

But if the perseverance and so Salvation of such as are in Deed and in Truth the Saints of God, be so sure and certain, what mean those frequent Caveats which we meet with in the Scripture? What mean those frequent Exhortations to perseverance?

Answer,

The perseverance of such is sure and certain, howbeit God brings it to pass by means; it is wrought in them by God, and yet their own endeavours also are required; and these Caveats and Exhortations are the means which God hath Sanctified for their Preservation from Apostacy.

Caveats we have many, and many threatenings; Exhortations many, and many promises; such as are, *Take heed to your selves. Watch in all things. Be stedfast and unmoveable, continue faithful unto the death. and I will give thee the Crown of Life.* The latter end of back-sliders shall be worse then their beginning, &c. By which, and other like passages, we are not to think either

that

that perseverance is in our own Power, or that the condition of Gods peculiar People is mutable in regard of him ; but they do imply how prone we are to sin, in regard of our selves ; and they shew that our own endeavours are required for the working out of our Salvation, as they are the means sanctified of God, for the preventing of sin, and for the exciting of our care, and so for the preserving of us unto his Heavenly Kingdom.

And whereas we are said to be kept by the Power of God ; we may not so understand it, as if we our selves might in the mean time sit still and do nothing : We are kept by God, and yet we also must keep our selves : It is God that keepeth us, and yet we also must Watch and Pray. But we are said to be kept by God for our greater encouragment. For if our endeavours be sincere, though they be but weak, yet they will be effectual, because we have such a mighty helper ; and withal it is to teach us, to whom we ought to ascribe all the Glory when our endeavours become effectual. It is God that must have the Glory of it, for it is by his Power that we are kept, who worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

Be strong therefore in the Lord, and in the Power of his might ; he that is with us is mightier then they that be against us. And therefore

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we need not fear ; for neither the power, nor the policy of Hell shall prevail against the People of God ; and the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, *Matt. 16. 18.*

The Ninth Question.

I Make no doubt of the Power of God, I know that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him : But I doubt of his Will, I fear that he will not do it.

Answer.

Surely this is a needless fear ; for his Love is everlasting, his Gifts and Calling are without Repentance ; and whom he loveth, to the end he loveth them. And therefore fear not, *the Lord will not forsake his People, for his own Names sake, because it hath pleased him to make you his People, I Sam. 12. 22.* So that if once he hath loved us so well, as to set us apart for himself ; he loveth himself better, then to forsake us. And though our unworthiness deserve that God should deny us, yet his Faithfulness is such, that he cannot deny himself.

Think therefore upon his Love, Meditate upon his Power, call to mind his Promise, forget not his Truth, and commit the keeping of your Soul unto him in well doing. Care you to do well, God will care for the rest : *For he preserveth the Souls of his Saints, he delivereth them out of the Hand of the Wicked, Psal. 79. 10.*

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The Tenth Question.

But seeing that mine own endeavours are required for the working out of my Salvation, and seeing that my assurance of Salvation cannot be sound, unless my Care and Diligence, in the constant using of all good means tending thereunto, be every way answerable: shew me I pray you by what means I may be enabled to continue patiently in well doing, that so at the last I may obtain Eternal Life.

Answer.

Hereunto many things are useful, the chiefest of which are these following :

1. *Labour to be sincere*, by considering that all our wayes are before God. To walk before God is the way to be perfect, and Sincerity is the way to perseverance. For the Righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean Hands, shall grow stronger and stronger, Job 17.9. but he whose heart is not upright before God, will start aside in the time of Tryal, See I John 2.19.

2. *Labour to overcome the World*, that so neither the cares and glory of it may too deeply affect us, nor yet the crosses and troubles of it, too much affright us. For each of these are great hindrances to the practice of Piety. Persecution is that heat that doth wither the Word, and by it some are made to deny their Master; and the cares of the World are the Thorns that

that choak the Word, and a means whereby it becomes unfruitful. *For the love of Money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, 1 Tim. 6.10* Arm your self therefore against both these; and to this end consider with your self, and think often upon that of our Saviour, *Mat. 16. 26. What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? and upon that, Mat. 8. 38. He that is ashamed of me, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed, &c.* and upon that *2 Tim. 2. 12. If we Suffer with him we shall Reign with him: but if we deny him, he will also deny us.* And Learn to discern between those things that be seen, and the things that be not seen: For the things that be seen, are but Temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal, *2 Cor. 4.18.*

3. *Watch in all things, for our Enemies are many, and security is dangerous, and Sin is so deceitful, that it will quickly harden us: and this is certain, a man never yields to his own corrupt disposition for the committing of any Evil, but he is ordinarily more willing to the second Act, than to the first; and who can tell how far he may go astray, that doth but once give way to their own corruption?*

4. *Labour to grow in Grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by considering that our labour cannot be in vain*

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in the Lord. This endeavour to grow in Grace is a special means to keep us from being drawn away with the error of the Wicked: but standing still, is the danger of turning back, and luke-warmness is the way to grow Key-cold.

5. *Despise not Prophecying*: if you would not quench the Spirit; if we would not be weary of well-doing, we must wait upon the word: *For that is able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified*, Act. 20.32.

And lastly, *We must Pray without ceasing*, that he who hath begun a good work in us, would also finish it, and grant that our whole Spirit, Soul and Body may be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. This is the way to continue in well-doing, and so running we shall obtain.

The Eleventh Question.

But though my Soul may be cared for, yet my Body may be in want. I want already many things that be necessary; or at least I fear that I shall want such things as be needful for me; and this Fear makes my Life the more careful:

Answer.

Doubtless if our Souls be cared for, other things may the less trouble us; howbeit against those things also there is matter of comfort in Jesus Christ. He that regards the Soul, will not neglect the Body; and he knows what

we have need of: and if we be of his Family, he will be sure to provide for us. He is able enough to help us, for the whole Earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof: and of his Will we have no cause to doubt, for he hath promised, that if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, all these things shall be added, as it were over and above, and into the Bargain, Mat.6.33. and he hath said, *That he will withhold no good thing from them that fear him*, Psal.34.9,10. Whereupon we may safely conclude, that if he keep any thing from us, it will be good for us to be without it: so that we may well say with the Prophet David, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I cannot want*, Psal. 23. 1. *For he that hath given us Christ, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Rom.8.32.

The Twelfth Question.

I have been a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; I have gone through much misery already, and many are the Crosses and troubles that are upon me at the present, and I fear that there be more and worse yet to come: so that sometimes I begin to think that the Lord doth not love me, and I am ready to doubt what will become of me; and I fear that my patience will one day be tryed, and that I shall faint in the day of Evil. Shew me therefore, I pray you, how I may be comforted against this Fear, and how I may be enabled to Wade

through all with Christian Patience?

Answer.

True it is, that the crosses and troubles which Men shall meet withal in the way to Heaven, are matters of offence, and unto some they are very powerful, turning them back from the hope laid before them, to the embracing of this present World. But if we would think upon things aright, in the midst of Misery; we should have comforts enough to refresh our Souls. Neither is there any trouble that can befall us, in the midst of which they have not matter of strong consolation, *now being justified by Faith, are at peace with God, through Jesus Christ.*

Now to the end that we may be the better comforted against all crosses, let us make use of these few considerations following:

1. Consider that it is no new or strange thing to be exercised with afflictions; neither are crosses and troubles of themselves an Argument of Gods hatred, but rather a token of his love, and a witness of our Adoption, if we bear them patiently, and make good use of them. There is not any affliction Incident to the nature of Man, which some one or other, even of Gods own dear Servants and Children, have not been exercised withal. Look upon *David* and *Jacob*, and *Joseph* and *Job*, and *Paul*, and all that cloud of Witnesses made mention of, *Heb. II*, and we shall find that

that through many afflictions, they all entred into the Kingdom of God. Nay, look upon the Captain of our Salvation, and we shall find that even he himself was made perfect through sufferings, *Heb. 2.10.* and this must needs be a special means to enable us to bear all with the greater patience, when we shall know and consider, that though our affliction be for number many, and for nature grievous, yet they are but the measure of our Betters.

2. Consider that God hath promised never to leave us nor forsake us, *Heb. 13. 5.* and his presence alone is support sufficient even in the worst of miseries. How can *Jacob* be afraid to go down into *Egypt*, when God himself hath said, he will go with him? *Gen. 46. 34.* God hath made the like promise unto us, and therefore if he bid us go into troubles; if he command us to walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, yet we need fear no evil, as long as he is with us; for if God be with us, who can be against us? *Rom. 8. 31.*

3. Consider, that unto such as do believe in Christ, the nature of afflictions is wholly altered; for their sting is pull'd out, and their bitterness is allay'd, they may favour of Anger, of Wrath they do not: Crosses they may be, Curses they are not: they may be Chastisements for our Correction, but they are not Judgments for our Confusion. For Christ hath

hath suffered whatever Wrath was due unto us by reason of our sins; and if we be once reconciled unto God by Faith in Christ, there is more matter of comfort in the assurance of his love, than there can be of dejection in the greatest trouble.

4. Consider that God intends nothing but good unto us, in his sharpest dealings with us: for it is all to humble us, and to prove us, and to do us good at our latter end; all is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his Holiness. For hereby he reforms what hath been amiss in us in times past; *hereby our iniquity shall be purged, and this is the fruit, to take away our sin, Isai. 27.9.*

Hereby he prevents sin in us for the time to come, as he did *Paul*, unto whom there was sent the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should have been exalted above measure, *2 Cor. 12.7.*

Hereby he doth wean us from the Love of the World and worldly Vanities. As long as all goes well with us, we are ready to say with *Peter*, *It is good to be here*: but when once we begin to be afflicted, then presently with the *Prodigal*, our minds are home-wards,

Hereby he deals with us as the Husband-man doth by the Vine, he pares and prunes us, to make us the more fruitful, *Job. 15.2.*

Hereby he doth exercise our Faith and Patience

tience, and makes trial of our sincerity, as he did by *Job*. And so in this he layes the ground of our greater Glory: for greater afflictions require greater patience; and the greater our patience is, the greater shall be our future happiness.

And the consideration of this must needs be a means to perswade us to Patience: for if we can willingly endure smarting water for the clearing of our eyes; and bitter Pills, and sharp Lances for the Health of our Bodies: much more ought we to bear with patience the smarting hand of the Almighty God for the health of our Souls. There is no affliction indeed joyous for the present, but grievous; but after it worketh the peaceable fruit of Righteousness to such as are exercised thereby, *Heb. 12.11.*

Consider that if we do continue faithful unto death, we shall receive a Crown of life. And if we do but have an eye to that recompence of reward, we shall easily be drawn, as *Moses* was, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater than the Treasures of *Egypt*; and to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the People of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, *Heb. 11.25,26.* For the happiness of that Kingdom which is to come, is such, that our blessed Saviour accounteth it matter of comfort against all fear whatsoever, as it doth plainly appear by

those words of his, Luk. 12. 32. Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Where the only Argument that he makes use of for the encouraging of his little Flock, is the hopes of the Kingdom. And again by that place, Mat. 5.11,12. Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you for my Names sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. Wherein our Saviour doth heaten his Disciples against Persecution, only upon this ground, because their reward should be great in Heaven. And surely in St. Paul's computation, the present affliction is not worthy the speaking of, in regard of that glory that shall be revealed, Rom. 8. 18. neither is there indeed any comparison at all between them ; for the one is but a light and momentary affliction, the other is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. So that this goodnels of God in the Land of the living, is enough to keep us from fainting under the heaviest Burden ; for though our outward Man decay, yet while we have an eye to this joy set before us, our inward Man will be renewed day by day. Fitly therefore is the hope of this happinels, called the *Anchor of the Soul, and the Helmet of Salvation* ; for by this

Anchor

Anchor we are preserved in the deep waters, by this *Helmet* we are protected in the times of danger; and by flying unto this hope, we are sure to find refuge in the day of evil.

And thus we may be comforted against evils present. Now as for those that are yet to come we may thus resolve, *either they shall not come at all*: for God will stand between us and harm, and keep us quiet from fear of evil: without his providence nothing can befall us, and therefore nothing shall befall to do us hurt: for he is a God that delighteth in the prosperity of his Servants.

Or if they do come, *yet the Lord will deliver us out of all*, there shall be an end. Enlargement will come, and he will deliver his People, even because he hath a favour unto them.

And in the mean time, *he will support us in them*, till deliverance do come: and his Grace will be sufficient for us. *For God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able: but with the temptation also make away to escape, that we may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. 10.13.

And *he will also give us benefit by them*: for he maketh all to work together for good to those that love him, Rom. 8.28. And thus we may be comforted against our fears also. In a word, there's none can know the way to heaven, better than he that dwells there. And therefore which way soever God leads us, it is

safe to follow him. The uneasiness of the way, makes us think that it is the farthest way about; but the Lord knows it is the next way home. And whatsoever they seem to us, yet *all the wayes of the Lord are mercy and truth*, unto such as keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies, *Psal. 25.10.*

The Thirteenth Question.

MY troubles are great, exceeding weighty and burdensome, and there are no sorrows like unto my sorrows; and this is that, that doth so break my heart, and drink up my spirit.

Answer.

This is answered in a word. It is but a conceit of our own, to think our own troubles the worst, when as indeed they are but common temptations, but say the worst, grant that there be none like them; yet if we shall compare them either with that which we have deserved, or with that which Christ himself for us hath suffered; or with that weight of Glory that shall be revealed, we shall then esteem them all as nothing. And as great as they are, if we would but look up and consider duly from whence they come, even that alone is enough to make us patient: for thus it was with *David*, *He was dumb and opened not his mouth*, considering who did it, *Psal. 39. 9.*

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The Fourteenth Question.

But my affliction is such, that I am kept from enjoying the Liberty of the House of God, and from praising him in the Congregation.

Answer.

This must needs be troublesome to Mindes well affected ; howbeit if God himself restrains us, we may then be sure that he requires not our presence. And in such a case, if our desires be with the Congregation, even that desire will be sufficient. Neither is the Lord so confined to the Congregation, but that he is near to all, that call upon him faithfully wheresoever they be, when necessity, and not neglect is the reason of their absence. And besides all this, if at any time, by reason of Age or Sicknes, we are not able to do those things which we do desire, and did perform in the time of our health and strength, then shall a willing Mind be well-pleasing unto God, and good desires shall be accepted. Yea, furthermore, this we must know for our consolation ; that a Patient submitting to the good will of God, is a worshiping of him, as appears by that *Job* 1. 20, 21. where *Job* is said to worship God, when he did with Patience and contentedness submit unto him : This is indeed a glorifying of God, and herein we acknowledge him to be our God, and in thus submitting we shall perform unto God as good service as ever we did in all

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our Lives. For this is the passive part of true Obedience, and the Tryal of sincerity in other things. To serve the Lord when all goes well with us, is much; and it is altogether as much, if not more, to resolve to trust in him, though he should Kill us. And if we can with Job hold fast our Righteousness, and in the hour of Temptation not fall away, this is a true Note of pure Religion, and a manifest Argument of Sincerity and Truth.

The Fifteenth Question.

And yet after all this I must dye; and when a few years are come, I shall go the way whence I shall not return: and the fear of Death doth much amaze me.

Answer.

Verily there is no solid Reason why it should; for God hath given us Victory over Death it self; through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Death of Christ was the Death of Death. Death fastning upon him, to whom it was not due, lost its sting, and so became less able to hurt those that had deserved it. Christ hath pul'd out the sting of Death, by dying for sin; so that now, like a Bee, or Snake without a sting, it may buzz about us and fright us, but it can-not hurt us. All the hurt that Death can do to such as believe in the Lord Jesus, is to free them out of Prison, to put an end to their days of sin, to carry them home to their Fathers house

to let them into their Masters joy, to pull down those Mouldring Cottages wherein they dwell, and to build them up to immortality. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also that sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him, and they shall be for ever with the Lord. And of this Happiness the worst kind of death that can befall us, cannot deprive us. A Man may dye in Poverty, he may dye with extremity of Torments, he may dye by common Calamities, and yet he may dye in Faith; and so dying his End shall be Peace: *For blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, &c. Rev. 14. 13.* So that if we did but thoroughly understand the nature of Death, and what it is to the People of God, we should be so far of being afraid of it, that with St. Paul, *We should rather desire to be dissolved, because then we should be with Christ, which is the best of all.*

To shut up this point, and so likewise the whole matter concerning afflictions, this let me add to all the rest, that if we desire to get good by these Meditations, and to be upheld with Comfort in the time of trouble, we must continue instant in Prayer. This is that Receipt which the Holy Ghost prescribes to all sorts of Persons, against all manner of grievances whatsoever, *James 5. 23.* This is the Remedy that is alwayes at hand, and never out of season. *Yea, this is that Messenger which being dis-our patch'd feet:*

patch'd aright, was never sent empty away. Believe it, If a Man were in a Case more desperate then Death, in a place worse then Hell, yet if there he could pray heartily, he should find comfort and strength, even beyond Hope: for our Prayers use to be with the utmost of our Hopes, if not beyond them, and yet God doth use to be better to us than our Prayers.

The Sixteenth Question.

I See now that there is matter enough of Solid Comfort in the Word of God. But the unevenness of my walking makes me to doubt, that I have no part nor portion in those precious promises, which God hath made unto his People.

Answer.

Promises I confess that are misapplied, can afford to the Soul no solid Comfort. But from our Failings we may not presently conclude that they do not at all belong to us: for God looks upon the heart; and where Ability is wanting, the Will is accepted.

Are not our Failings your Grief? Are they not besides your Will? Are they not contrary to the current of your Desires, and the main bent of your Resolutions and Endeavours? It is not your Endeavour to do the Will of God, though it cost you the parting with the sweetnes of Sin, even your own Iniquity? And is it not your Resolution, that you will not wickedly depart from God? If it be so, then notwithstanding

Standing your Failings, you may say with *David*, *I have kept thy Word*: For though this be not such a measure of keeping as the Law requireth, yet it is such a keeping as God accepteth: for he accounteth such as keep themselves from wilful sins, upright and innocent through **Christ** their strength and their Redeemer, as appears by that passage, *Psal. 19. 13.*

And this is a true Rule, whereby to proceed in the judging of our selves. If a Man that believes in Christ, continues in an unknown sin that cannot hinder the uprightness of his heart, so the Ignorance be not wilful; but the least touch of knowledge or wilfulness mars Sincerity. So that if our failings be not wilful, though they be many, yet they cannot hinder our interest in the promises of God.

And what can we now object more? Do we doubt the Truth of all these Promises? Surely we need not; for God is not a Man that he should lie, neither the Son of Man that he should repent: Hath he spoken, and shall he not do it? Hath he said, and shall it not come to pass? Was he ever yet worse then his word? And have not we had experience of his Love, as well upon our selves as others? Is he not the true witness, and a God that is most zealous of his own glory? Why then are we disquieted, and why are our hearts dejected within us? Still trust in God, make straight steps to your Feet:

Feet: Pray for Faith in the promises, and stir up your selves to take hold of God, tarry the Lords Leasure, and fear not; light is Sown for the Righteous, and gladness for such as be upright in heart; it may lie buried in the ground out of sight for a season, it may be somewhat long in coming up, and very unlikely to come to any perfection: Nevertheless, in due season, we shall reap if we faint not. And therefore cast not away your confidence. For the worst is past, the good is begun, the best is at hand: Lift up therefore the Hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble Knees; and run with Patience the Race set before us; and being partakers of such precious promises, let us think upon them, believe in them, and live in them: and in so doing, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Here is the sum of all. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom. 8.1.* *There is no condemnation,* and there's our comfort: the ground hereof is Christ; the way unto it, is by Faith to be in him; the evidence of it, is *to walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* In the matter of merit, Christ is all; in matter of interest and application Faith is all, in matter of Evidence and manifestation, new Obedience is all. Nothing can free us from condemnation, but Christ; nothing can give us interest

interest in Christ, but Faith ; nothing can assure us that we do truly believe in Christ, and shall be delivered from condemnation, but a care to be obedient unto Christ in all things : wherefore let us so believe, and so live : for as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace shall be upon them, and upon the *Israel* of God.

Now the God of Hope, fill us with all joy and Peace in believing, that we may abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost *Amen* and *Amen*.

In the multitude of the thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul, Psal.94.19.

F I N I S.

Mr. B Green scnt - this was print at
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